

D-736
Charles H. Parks & Company
Fishing Creek
Private

c. 1925

The Charles H. Parks seafood packinghouse is probably the oldest and most complete frame structure built to process seafood remaining in Dorchester County. Dating to the second quarter of the twentieth century, the long, gable roofed frame packinghouse follows a utilitarian architectural form common to seafood processing plants erected during the early twentieth century. Central to the facility is the large picking room, which is flanked on its east side by the steam room that houses the retort and boiler, while the packing room and cooler are located to the west. Although covered by vinyl siding, the main building retains its essential form and most of its early twentieth-century interior finishes. The interior spaces, in fact, are some of the least changed of all of the packinghouses in Dorchester County.

Captain Charles Henry Parks established Charles H. Parks Seafood in Wingate, Maryland in 1917, moving to Fishing Creek in the late 1920s. The company began packing oysters and latter added crabmeat. The company employed 30 to 40 people in 1933. When the Fishing Creek packinghouse burned down in 1933, Capt. Parks rented the current building for about five years until he was able to purchase it. It was a timber frame building, 30 feet wide and 108 feet long, built on pilings that extended about ten feet from shore. Oyster shells gradually filled in the marshy edge of the land until they surrounded the building. The company continues to operate, and the firm advertised in 2001 for 40 openings for temporary, full-time seasonal crab pickers.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-736

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Charles H. Parks & Company
other _____

2. Location

street and number 2405 Hoopers Island Road _____ not for publication
city, town Fishing Creek vicinity _____
county Dorchester

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name James Kenneth Ruark & Virgil Warren Ruark
street and number Post Office Box 100 telephone 410-397-3400
city, town Fishing Creek state Maryland zip code 21634

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber PLC 236 folio 846
city, town Cambridge tax map 100 tax parcel 155 tax ID number 6-091970

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- _____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<u>_____</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory <u>_____</u>	

7. Description

Inventory No D-736

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Charles H. Parks & Company crab packing house stands at 2405 Hoopers Island Road in the community of Fishing Creek on Hoopers Island, Dorchester County, Maryland. The 108' x 30' crab packing house stands on the eastern edge of the road bordering Back Creek. The story-and-a-half ten-bay by three-bay frame packing house straddles the water's edge with part of the building supported on pilings. The main elevation faces south with the principal roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built during the second quarter of the twentieth century, c. 1940, the story-and-a-half frame packing house is supported by pilings, and the exterior is clad with vinyl siding over asphalt shingles. The building has a concrete floor, and the low pitched gable roof is covered with tin. The west gable end is pierced by three square windows on the first floor and a pair of gable end windows under the low pitched roof. Extending the main block on the north and east sides are shed roofed additions. The north and east sides face open water with dock access off the northeast corner.

The south side is an asymmetrical ten-bay façade with a recessed entrance bay located at the west end. The first floor is pierced by a bank of two-pane windows, and the second floor is lighted by a series of six-pane windows. The edge of the roof is finished with an extended eave and enclosed soffits. The west end entrance alcove access a double door entrance that opens into an interior, lateral passage. The recessed alcove also provides access to the cooler.

The interior is finished with vertical board walls, a concrete floor and a mixture of an open joist or boarded over ceiling. The vertical board walls are painted white with the lower three feet covered in a light green color. A series of braced posts are centered in the structure to support the floor joists that extend from the south side to the north side. Located on the south side of the entrance passage is a company office entered through a shallow profile four-panel door. There is an open joist ceiling in the office. The lateral hall leads to the packing and weighing room where there is another door to the cooler. A wooden work table is covered with a stainless steel top. Piercing the east wall of the packing room is a series of door and interior wall openings. A Z-batten board door is located in the north corner of the interior wall for access to the picking room.

The largest room is the picking room, which is set up with a half dozen stainless steel topped tables. Located on the south side is a conveyor system for waste materials. There is as well a coal stove set up along the south wall with a metal vent. At the east end of the room is a vertical board wall that separates the picking room from the boiler room set up with the "steam box" for cooking crabs. The boiler room has direct access to the dock as well as a front concrete paving off the southeast corner of the building.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-736

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Charles H. Parks seafood packinghouse is probably the oldest and most complete frame structure built to process seafood that still stands in Dorchester County. Dating to the second quarter of the twentieth century, the long, gable roofed frame packinghouse follows a utilitarian architectural form common to seafood processing plants erected during the early twentieth century. Central to the facility is the large picking room, which is flanked on the east end by the steam room that houses the retort and boiler, while the packing room and cooler are located to the west side. Although covered by vinyl siding, the building retains its essential form and most of its early twentieth-century interior finishes. The interior spaces, in fact, are some of the least changed of all of the packinghouses in Dorchester County.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Captain Charles Henry Parks established Charles H. Parks Seafood in Wingate, Maryland in 1917, moving to Fishing Creek in the late 1920s. The company began packing oysters and later added crabmeat. The company employed 30 to 40 people in 1933. When the Fishing Creek packinghouse burned down in 1933, Capt. Parks rented the current building for about five years until he was able to purchase it. It was a timber frame building 30 feet wide by 108 feet long, built on pilings about ten feet from shore. Oyster shells gradually filled in the marshy edge of the land until they surrounded the building. He was president of the company until the late 1940s when his son Sam Parks took over. The bulk of their business was through a wholesale fish market called J. J. McDonald's in Baltimore. The company stopped shucking oysters in 1948. Electricity came to the island in the later 1940s that replaced the company's generator. Peak employment for the company was in the 1950s. Business began to drop off in the 1960s when both the harvests and the number of available workers declined. As the roads improved, it became feasible for more people to drive to Cambridge to work at year-round jobs with benefits. Kenneth and Virgil Ruark bought the business from their uncle Sam Parks in 1970, and Kenneth Ruark served as president until 1992. Virgil Ruark, Jr. went to work for the company in 1974. The brand name "Captain Charlie" was chosen in the early 1980s when the company switched from metal to plastic containers.¹

Charles H. Parks Seafood was the second company on Hoopers Island to hire Mexican migrant labor under the Federal H-2B non-agricultural guest worker program in 1991.² The company incorporated in 1992 and Virgil

¹ Interview with Virgil Ruark, Jr., Fishing Creek, Maryland, May 30, 2001

² Interview with Jay Newcomb, Fishing Creek, Maryland, April 14, 1999, Oral History 126

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-736

Name Charles H. Parks & Company
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

Ruark, Jr. became president. In 2000 he employed 20 workers processing crabmeat of whom 18 were Mexican.³ Ninety percent of the crabmeat produced by this company is handled by two wholesalers, one in Baltimore and one on the Eastern Shore, and the rest is sold to restaurants and cash sales on the premises. The company owns two trucks that take the freight to Baltimore or deliver it to commercial trucking companies in Cambridge for delivery to Baltimore. Most of the crabs are purchased from local watermen, but some crabs are purchased from Virginia or North Carolina when needed. The crab chum, or waste, is sold to be mixed with sawdust as fertilizer. In 2001, the company advertised 40 openings for temporary, full-time seasonal crab pickers.⁴

³ 2000 *Maryland/DC Manufacturers Directory*, p. 238.

⁴ *Cambridge Daily Banner*, Classifieds, January 22, 2001, p. 9.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-736

Name Charles H. Parks & Company
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

Charles H. Parks & Company
2405 Hoopers Island Road
Fishing Creek, Dorchester County, Maryland
Chain of title

Map 100, Parcel 155 .30 acres

PLC 236/846

John C. Phillips & Catherine C. Phillips

to

7/17/1985

James Kenneth Ruark & Virgil Warren Ruark
Trading as Charles H. Parks & Company

PLC 228/587

Amos C. Phillips, Jr.
John C. Phillips
Emmett R. Phillips

Florence Goss
Patricia Aaron

to

11/7/1983

John C. Phillips & Catherine C. Phillips

24,300 square feet of land

PLC 220/504

Myrtle M. Phillips (Amos C. Phillips, Sr. deceased)

to

10/4/1981

Amos C. Phillips, Jr.
John C. Phillips
Emmett R. Phillips

Florence Goss
Patricia Aaron

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-736

Name Charles H. Parks & Company
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

WHM 11/51

Amanda E. Creighton & Jeremiah T. Creighton
William W. Adams & Florence Adams

to

11/3/1921

Amos Phillips

1 ¼ acres

no earlier deeds ever having been executed, Emily Parker Adams,
mother of Amanda and William had from her parents, Harriet
Anna Meekins Parker and Richard Parker

WHM 6/325

Benjamin F. Travers & Louisa Travers

to

5/21/1919

Amos Phillips

CL 25/178

William F. Applegarth, Trustee for the benefit of creditors of
John A. E. Simmons

to

1/29/1901

Benjamin F. Travers

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-736

Name Charles H. Parks & Company
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

CL 19/511

John G. Tyler & wife

to

8/6/1895

John A. E. Simmons
2 acres

CL 23/450

Harry I. Phillips

to

7/26/1898

John A. E. Simmons

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-736

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.

Personal Interview with Virgil Ruark, Jr., grandson of Charles H. Parks

(See footnotes for full list of resources)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .30 acres

Acreage of historical setting .30 acres

Quadrangle name Honga, Maryland

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian and Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian		
organization	Private Consultants	date	5/30/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

This is a detailed nautical chart of the Hong Kong Islands. The main island is labeled 'HONG KONG' and features numerous points of interest, including Fishing Pt, Gunners Pt, Nans Pt, Smoke Pt, and Ferry Pt. The chart also shows several smaller islands, such as Upper Hooper Island, Middle Hooper Island, and Wrotten Island. Key locations on these islands include Fishing Creek, Clay Pt, Tom Pt, Horse Pt, and Pons Pt. The chart includes a grid system and depth soundings, providing a comprehensive view of the maritime environment around Hong Kong.

D-736



D-736

CHARLES H. PARIES AND COMPANY

FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER COUNTY, MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

4/2001, PAUL TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEL/MD. HIST. TRUST

1 of 7



D-736

CHARLES H. PARKS AND COMPANY
FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER CO., MD.
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

4/2001. PAUL TOWNART, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEG./MD HISTORICAL TRUST

2 of 7



D-736

CHARLES H. PARKS AND COMPANY

ESSEX CREEK, DORCHESTER CO., MD.

NORTH ELEVATION

4/2001, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

N.E. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST

3 OF 7



D-736

CHARLES H. PARKS AND COMPANY
KISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER CO., MD.
PACKING ROOM

4/2001, PAUL TOWLER, PITTSBURGH

NB3/MD HISTORICAL TRUST

4 of 7



D-736

CHARLES H. PARKS AND COMPANY
FISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER CO., MD.
PARKING ROOM

4/2001, PAUL TOWNSEND, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEC. / MD HISTORICAL TRUST

5027



D-736

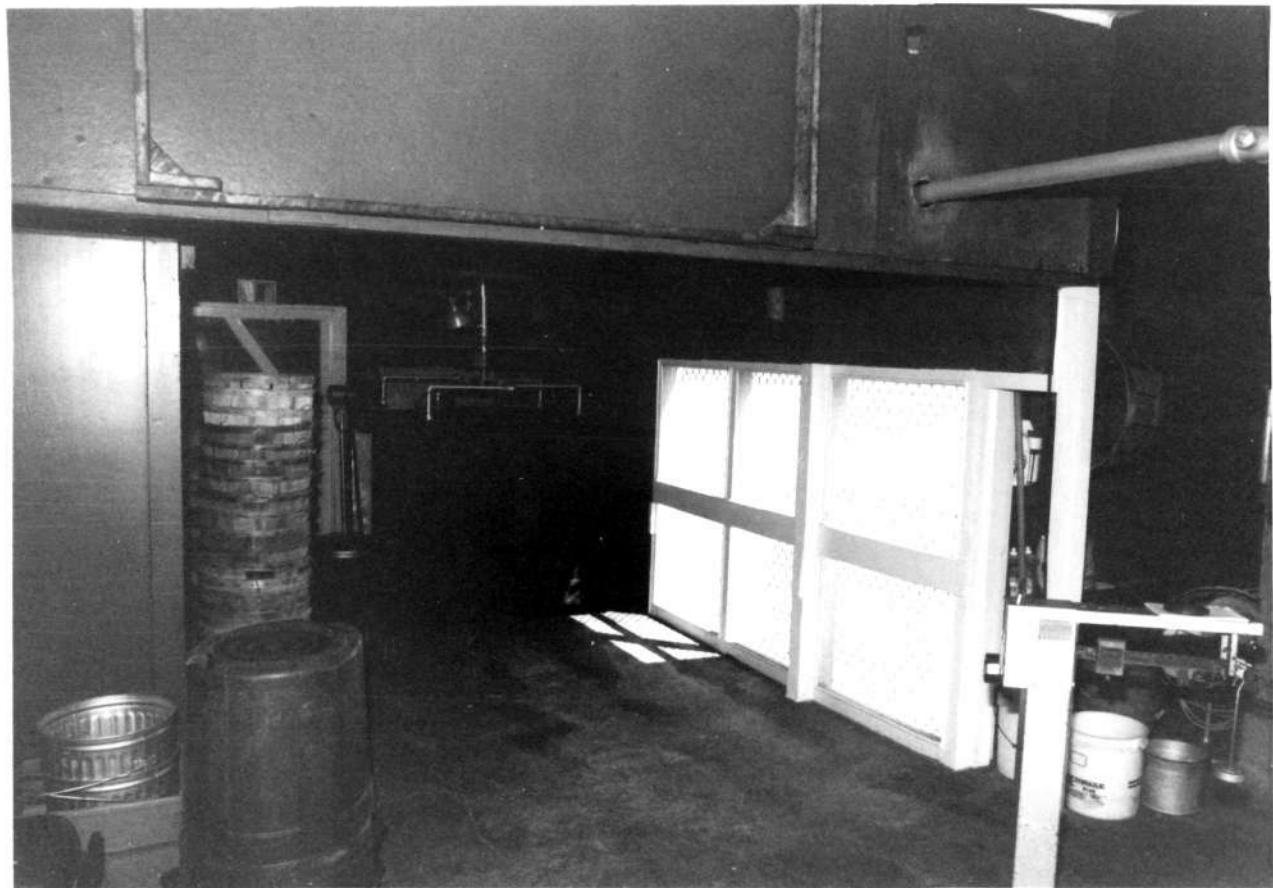
CHARLES H. PARKS AND COMPANY
KISHING CREEK, DORCHESTER CO., MD.

PICKING ROOM

4/2001, PAUL TOURANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEZ./MD HISTORICAL TRUST

6 or 7



D-736

CHANCES IT. PARKS AND COMPANY
FISHING CATCH, DORCHESTER CO., MA.
RETURN. BUILD ROOM

4/2001, PAUL TOURANT, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEB. / MA HISTORICAL TRUST
7 x 7